NMCI, Service Management and Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL)

Defining Best Practices for service provisioning, metering, service-level assurance, cost allocation, billing, and the development and maintenance of a service catalog.

Are the services provided under NMCI aligned with the missions they are designed to support? To a large extent, it is the success of the service management process—where the NMCI supplier offers services at defined service levels and price points, and the DoN organizations select from these services from a catalog of offerings—that ultimately defines the success of the NMCI program in the eyes of the stakeholders. In the course of this interaction, the DoN organizations' expectations are set, and they are able to choose and pay for only those services that meet their objectives. At the same time, NMCI is better able to analyze demand for its services and to plan for future requirements. The net is a win-win—for the NMCI contractor and the DoN stakeholders that it serves.

To better align their people, processes and technologies with the needs of their businesses, U.S. IT organizations are increasingly turning to the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL). Widely embraced in Europe since 1995, where it was initiated by the UK's Office of Government Commerce and the British Standards Institution, ITIL defines a series of best IT practices known as the IT Service Management framework (ITSM).

Key Objectives

According to its leading proponent, the IT Service Management Forum (itSMF), the three key objectives of Service Management are:

- To align IT services with the current and future needs of the business and its customers.
- To improve the quality of the IT services.
- To reduce the long-term cost of provisioning those services.

IT Service Management achieves these objectives by providing all the essential business and operational functions of service provisioning, metering, service-level assurance, cost allocation, billing, and the development and maintenance of a service catalog.

Service Provisioning is the automatic activation of service requests to speed deployment and minimize the amount of time the IT staff spends on administrative procedures. Ideally, a provisioning system should interface with other business systems in order to define and track the workflow for processes that extent beyond the bounds of the IT department. An example would be the ordering and deployment of a new desktop system, which could involve asset management, inventory, procurement and finance, among other functions.

Metering is the collection of enterprise-wide resource usage data. A robust metering function will let administrators measure application and resource usage for shared resources across Internet domains and will track that usage by individual user, department, line of business or customer. This enables IT managers to allocate resources based on the actual level of user activity that needs to be supported, and gives business managers the ability to prioritize their IT investments based on which of these activities offer the greatest return.

Service Assurance ensures that service commitments are met and that appropriate levels of service are provided. With service assurance, service packages suited for a wide range of business requirements can be created, and administrators can define and implement SLAs and then track performance and limit usage against the defined parameters. Service assurance can also be applied to monitor and enforce service levels for third-party services.

A **Service Catalog** allows administrators to simplify administration and provide easy access to all IT services. Through the catalog, users can access their current services, browse for additional service offerings, subscribe to new services, and review their account status. Administrators can track user activity and set up accounts, review service reports and set service levels and rate plans.

Billing is used to set rate plans and allocate IT costs. The billing system must be flexible and support usage-based as well as flat-rate billing. The cost data that is generated can be used by IT managers to evaluate investments, forecast budget requirements and justify new outlays. The billing function can also be used to implement departmental chargeback in order to recover IT costs and influence user behavior.

IT Service Management Benefits

When implemented in an integrated fashion, according to ITIL guidelines, IT Service Management affords IT managers greater visibility into their operations and tighter control of their costs, while dramatically improving IT service levels. The benefits can be summarized as follows:

- Better communication between NMCI and DON stakeholders
- Enhanced credibility within NMCI and DON stakeholders
- Shorter time-to-deploy for new IT services
- Standardized procedures that are easy to implement
- Greater visibility into IT resource consumption and spending
- Reduced costs and increased ROI
- Better documentation of IT services, performance, and SLA achievement

Summary.

While this is the end goal of implementing the IT Service Management framework, there are many important benefits that can be realized along the way. By identifying those areas of the IT operation causing the greatest pain to the organization, IT management can begin rolling out an ITIL implementation that addresses those specific issues. As experience is gained and benefits accrue, the foundation is laid to adopt a “service-centric” orientation throughout the NMCI and across the enterprise.

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